

5-20-1973

Commencement 5/20/1973

James Robinson

Nancy Slaughter

John Driscoll

Walter Mondale

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EIGHTY-FOURTH COMMENCEMENT

MAY 20, 1973

MACALESTER COLLEGE

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

2:00 P.M.

MACALESTER COLLEGE FIELDHOUSE

Macalester College Archives
Audio Reel #231
1973 Commencement 5/20/1973

DRAFT

[00:00]

Dr. Adams: Eternal God, today we celebrate. We celebrate the life that you have given to us, we celebrate the vision and dedication of many men and women through many years that have created and sustained this college, we celebrate the achievements of the students in this graduating class and the loving support of families and friends and college personnel that have made their achievements possible. We celebrate the contributions to the world that are the daily service of the men and women whom the college chooses to honor today. Whose lives are to us a pleasure, an inspiration, and a ground of hope. And today we also pray that this college may continue and extend its ministry of education for the enrichment of human life. We pray that those who are graduating in these times that try men's souls may follow clear and high ideals, that they may face difficulties and disappointments with courage, and in all things persevere—as good citizens of our nation, our world, and your kingdom. We hope that we are celebrating in the spirit of Jesus, amen.

[02:12]

[Speaker?]: This is the 84th commencement in the history of Macalester College. And on behalf of the graduating class, the faculty, the staff, the officers and the trustees, I welcome you all. You have come from far and near, and we are grateful for your every presence. Among you are wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles, sisters and brothers, and just friends. You have supported the Class of 1973 in manifold ways and you are entitled to take pride in their

graduation. A private college depends on the support of many unseen persons whose gifts through the years have provided scholarships and professorships, buildings and programs, and these friends of the college may also take pride in this class.

[03:07]

Commencement is an occasion to recognize not only the graduates of the latest year, but for acknowledging distinctions among graduates of former classes. At this time, recipients of the Distinguished Citizen Alumni Citations will be presented by the President of the Alumni Association, Ms. Nancy Slaughter. [Applause]

[03:38]

Nancy Slaughter: Thank you. I'm very pleased and honored to present citations to eight distinguished citizens from our Macalester community who have assumed leadership roles in the civic, social and religious activities that are so essential for promoting a better life for all. A. Phil Beedon, Class of '28. To you, Phil Beedon, for your many-faceted, 30-year dedication to Macalester as teacher, administrator, alumni director and alumni editor, and for your contributions to your field of journalism and to your church.

[04:30]

Arthur E. Bell, Class of 1940. For being an active churchman who has taken the witness of the Christian message into your business, educational and civic activities.

[04:53]

Albert A. Beltmann, Class of '23. For a lifetime of continuous hard work in business and civic communities, and for your commitments both in time and gifts to the college. Audrey [Lucile] Cochrane, Class of '34. For your deep feeling about social concerns, candidness, and expression of your views, lifetime advocacy of equality of women, and more recently, courage in facing the effects of a major illness. [Applause] G. Theodore Mitau, Class of '40. For your distinguished leadership in higher education, first felt on this campus and now expanded to a larger forum where your outstanding administrative abilities are being used to chart new directions in a new age of higher education. [applause] Joan Adams Mondale, Class of '52. For your achievements and merging deep commitment with social action and a lifelong interest in art with the world of politics. Walter F. Mondale, Class of 1950, for outstanding public service to your state and country, which has earned the pride of your alma mater, the respect of your national party, and the gratitude of millions of Americans, for whom your hard work and compassion have improved conditions of life. [applause] George Wemeier, Class of '52. Because you have achieved a rare balance between family responsibilities, a career of teaching, and an active role in neighborhood community development. [applause]

[07:37]

The college awards honorary degrees to men and women distinguished for their devotion to the college, and to intellectual and humanitarian values. A committee on honorary degrees consisting of two trustees, two professors, and two students, nominates candidates to the faculty, and the faculty's recommendations are then acted upon by the Board of Trustees. Candidates for

honorary degrees will now be presented by Mr. W. John Driscoll, Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

[08:18]

John Bristol: For the honorary degree Doctor of Laws, I present W. Harry Davis. [Applause]

W. Harry Davis, born and educated in Minneapolis, you have contributed generously to the life of your native city. From your early years of involvement as an athletic coach in the work of Phyllis Wheatley Community Center, you became known to young people as an understanding friend, a wise counselor, and a respected leader. Your leadership qualities and social concerns soon broadened your activities in your community, but throughout your busy life you have continued active participation in many youth organizations. Since 1968 you have been executive director and president of the Urban Youth Coalition in Minneapolis. In 1969, you were elected to the board of Plymouth National Bank, and you became chairman of the Minneapolis Board of Education in 1971. You also served as an assistant district lay leader for the Methodist Church, and as a member of the official board of Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church. With appreciation and recognition for the time, energy, and leadership to more than 30 community and state organizations dedicated to improving social welfare, racial progress, biracial understanding, community health, and education, you are recommended for the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa. [Applause]

[11:10]

W. Harry Davis, in the name of Macalester College, on the nomination of its honorary degree committee, on the recommendation of its faculty, and by the approval of the Board of Trustees, I

have the honor to confer upon you the degree Doctor of Laws, and in recognition thereof, you will now be invested with the appropriate hood and presented with a diploma. [Applause]

[11:51]

For the honorary degree Doctor of Humane Letters, I present Professor Kenneth Leeds Holmes.

[applause] Kenneth Leeds Holmes, educated at Yale University, the University of Louisville, and the University of Minnesota, you began your professional career in 1925, and for 35 years your lively teaching, warmth of personality, council of wisdom, and sense of humor, enriched the life of Macalester College. Generations of students and alumni, as well as your many friends in the community, have been touched by your kindness, understanding, and fellowship. During your long years as secretary of the faculty, your colleagues [?] the delightful style of your thoughtfully recorded minutes. Although you did not retire from actively teaching until 1961, you voluntarily stepped aside from the chairmanship of the department of history in 1957, to give younger colleagues the opportunity of leadership. The Canadian-American Conference, which you helped establish in 1941, provided a unique experience for students of Macalester and the United College of Winnipeg, annually to discuss current issues of mutual interest. At the 25th anniversary of the conference, in 1965, you became a fellow of United College, in recognition of your significant contribution to creative education and international goodwill. In 1965, you received the Thomas Jefferson Great Teacher Award. Through the years, you extended yourself beyond your academic life to serve as an officer in the United States Army in two wars, and you have been a ruling elder in your church. You have earned the respect and admiration of all who know you, but this tribute would not be complete without grateful recognition of Martha, your

wife, who has so graciously shared your Macalester years. With esteem and affection, you are recommended for the degree of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa. [Applause]

[15:12]

Kenneth Leeds Holmes, in the name of Macalester College, on the recommendation of its honorary degree committee, on the motion of its faculty and by the approval of the board of trustees, I have the honor to confer upon you the degree Doctor of Humane Letters, and in recognition thereof, you will now be invested with the appropriate hood and presented the diploma. [Applause]

[16:20]

[President James Robinson]: This year, the senior class, through its members on the commencement committee, selected Senator Walter F. Mondale to deliver the major address today. 25 years ago, a sophomore at this college, wrote in the pages of *Mac Weekly*, a column endorsing unselfish foreign policy, increased educational opportunities for the underprivileged, and federal assistance to ensure adequate, equitable medical care for all. Walter Frederick Mondale, the writer of that column, has continued to dedicate himself to the broad principles embodied in these goals throughout his years of service to Macalester College, the State of Minnesota, and the United States and humane world. Fritz Mondale was born at Ceylon, Minnesota, on January 5th, 1928, the son of a Methodist minister. Like his brother Clarence, Class of 1947, he early distinguished himself for his unconventionality by leaving a Methodist family for a Presbyterian college in September 1946. Later he graduated with honors from the University of Minnesota and received the bachelor of law degree from that university. Since

then, his career included two years in the armed services, legal practice in Minneapolis, two terms as attorney general of Minnesota, and since 1964, distinction in the United States Senate. Last November he was reelected with the largest number of votes ever cast for a statewide candidate in Minnesota.

[18:06]

Senator Mondale is a supporter of federal help for higher education. His most active and current legislative interests pertain to children, youth, and families. A man of judgement, he married Joan Adams, Class of '52, daughter of former Macalester chaplain and Mrs. Jane Maxwell Adams, and they have three children. Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to present to you the honorable Walter F. Mondale, a Senator of the United States. [Applause]

[18:55]

Walter Mondale: Thank you very much.

[19:06]

WM: Thank you, President Robinson, for that very kind and gracious introduction. Thank you Dr. Adams, Reverend Currier, Nancy Slaughter, John Driscoll, Chancellor Mitau and other honorees, especially to the honorees today, the graduating class of 1973. I know this is a moment of great pride for you, and I want you to know that just before we came on I talked to Dean Bowman, and I said, "I'll betcha this is a moment of pride for you," and he said, "In part, but, if you knew these graduates as well as I did 'surprise' would be a better word." [Laughter]. Or, he said something like that.

[20:12]

You know, as I stand here today I am so overwhelmed with memories and associations of this school. I remember when Dean Doty called me in and said I had broken all records for skipping compulsory chapel. And she said “I want you to go see Adams” and I called Joan immediately, that’s the only way I could figure of working it out. And it was here at the Student Union that we were married, again by Dr. Adams. And what I thought was somewhat twisted commitment in which I agreed to love, honor, obey, and then he went a little further about washing the dishes and changing the diapers and then I don’t think there were any commitments on the other side of the deal at all, that’s the first time I’d seen Presbyterianism in action. And then we were married and lived in St. Paul. And I remember the first fight we had, it was over whether we would have a dog. I grew up in Southern Minnesota and I love dogs and Joan said it wasn’t fair to raise one in a city. And we argued about it and I said, “Look, let’s see if we can’t settle this thing.” I said I agree to a dog if it’s a small dog, it has short hair, and if it’s a male. And she smiled and said that just shows you can resolve your differences if you try and two days later brought home our female collie. And I’ve gotten along with her fine ever since.

[22:09]

It’s nice to be with so many friends of mine on the dais here that I’ve learned from and been friends with all these years. I remember the years that I took Political Science from Ted Mitau, and the years that I’ve known him since, and how that relationship has remained constant. Last year I was giving a commencement at St. Cloud College. And as the czar and emperor of the state college system, Ted Mitau spoke before me. And he was in high flight, it was a beautiful speech, but I thought it was familiar. And I looked over on the platform and there was the

yellowest set of notes you ever seen in your life, and right on the top it said Political Science 102, Main Hall: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. And in that speech he coined a new, something new for me anyway, in which he told the listeners about the four branches of government: the executive, the legislative, the judicial, and the state college board. And I really was impressed by that. Seriously, I'm delighted to be here at what I regard to be one of the great colleges in our country. Dean Bowman, who was the dean during my time, said that honorary doctorates were given mostly to people who gave money, and once in a great while on the basis of merit. But it seems today that Macalester has awarded its honorary doctorates to two people who merited above all, and who not only have distinguished careers of their own, but stand for something very precious and very important in our country. Ken and Martha Holmes are old friends of ours, he was my history prof, but he was more than that. And he's been more than that to every student who ever took one of his classes. He's been a friend and a helper as well. And I wonder how many colleges have the kind of special spirit that they had and continue to have here. And as one looks back on his college career, it's that special relationship, not just the academic but the friendship and the support, and the warmth that one has that above all makes one cherish these days. And so in honoring Harry Davis—some years back John Gardner said, "What this country really needs above all, are loving critics." People who are critical of our faults but who love society enough to not to destroy it but to reform it instead. And Harry Davis is one of the great reformers and lovers of American society and you couldn't have picked a more magnificent honoree than Harry. I'm delighted to be on the program with him.

[25:43]

These are difficult days in Washington and throughout the country as you well know. The other day James Kilpatrick went to the movie *The Last Tango in Paris*. And at the end of it the fellow sitting next to him said it's a lousy movie but at least it got my mind off of Watergate.

[Laughter] And the fellow sitting next to him said, "Yeah, but not for long." As Americans, I think we realize that we are in the midst of what can only be called a profound crisis of confidence and spirit. This country has lived now for nearly two hundred years as a free society. Three years from now we will celebrate that two hundredth anniversary. But as we move toward that day, I think we realize that we are under pressure, under challenge, perhaps like we've never been before. In a real sense, we see dangers that I don't think we expected to see. Dangers that erode the fundamental value of our vote, dangers which challenge our constitutional processes, and the enforcement of the law, and perhaps most fundamental of all, dangers which challenge what we thought was our most fundamental reliance on the truth, which comes from the top leaders of American society. These events have eroded public confidence to the point that virtually every poll that one looks at shows that the American people increasingly do not trust their government, do not trust the free processes of our society, and do not believe what public leaders tell them. And society cannot prosper or survive on that kind of cynical diet. As Lincoln once put it, with public sentiment, nothing can fail. Without it, nothing can succeed. I believe there are several fundamental reasons for this erosion in public faith. Number one I think it's the corruption of private money in American politics.

[28:30]

And I don't know how else to put it. In the past election, politicians spent nearly 400 million dollars being elected to public office in this country. We spent one third more than in 1972 than

was spent in 1968. And one might ask how you raise that money, and I'll tell you you don't do it by raiding UNICEF boxes on Halloween night. And it is the subtle compromise and sometimes blatant corruption of money that buys public decisions at all levels of government and under both political parties, which I think as much as anything is causing people to believe that somehow this government they thought was theirs is really owned by the people who have the special wealth and the special power to control it through the device of campaign contributions. And I think one thing we must do, if we want to reclaim the faith of the American people, is to quickly pass a law which provides public support for at least the presidential campaigns and possibly the congressional campaigns so that it will be possible for honest men and women to run for office and to be able to serve the public and their conscience once they are elected. [Applause]

[30:16]

Secondly, it seems to me that this last campaign raises a new fear, which can effect and corrupt the American election process. This is the first election in which the dirty tricks that we have sometimes peddled abroad of espionage, of disruption, of paid spies, of sponsored deceit, techniques we have used against those we regard as our enemies overseas. This is the first time that those techniques, and many of the people that have been hired to use them, have been turned in on our own political process, and used against political enemies in the domestic supposedly campaigns in American society. And I believe that one of the things we must do for sure is to make certain that never again will we ever see the FBI or the CIA or any of these police state tactics used against anybody in a domestic political campaign so long as this nation survives.

[Applause]

[31:43]

A third thing that I believe has undermined public confidence has just been the question of truthfulness or candor in American politics. And this has been true for too long, under political leadership of both political parties, in a way that's difficult to define. We have permitted the high standards of ethics and candor and truthfulness that we teach our children, that we learn from our clergy Sunday mornings, that we learn here at Macalester College, we have permitted those standards to be eroded, and we have permitted our public leaders to sponsor things that are not true. And we have excused them from time to time for saying things which are outright falsehoods. I believe American society is beginning to pay the price of accepting these reduced standards in this country. I have seen this going on for too long. If one reads the Pentagon Papers, it's quite clear that our government, under several administrations, had one private policy and an entirely different policy that they were describing to the people of this country. And while our president was telling us under several different administrations that we were pursuing a policy of peace, the real policy was no such thing. I went through with Senator Brooke of Massachusetts, nearly four months during the war between the Pakistanis and the Bangladesh, in an effort to determine whether our government was supplying arms to the Pakistanis which they in turn used to slaughter the people of Bangladesh, whose only crime was to vote in a government which they themselves controlled, something which Americans should not find hard to understand. On three separate occasions, by three official statements from top levels of the state department, we and the public were assured that not a single shipment of armaments were being sent to the Pakistanis. We found out later that in fact as those statements were being issued, arms were shipped, were there and some were being loaded, and the United States Senate and the American people were being told a lie. And now we see the denials, and finally the

admissions, in the Watergate. I don't believe this country can compromise with the truth. I think the truth should be a minimum essential ingredient for the election of any decent person to public office from the lowest level to the highest level.

[35:00]

Without truth, the American people cannot act responsibly on public policy. You can't pass a law against lying, but you don't have to elect liars. And this is something that the American people must decide on their own as voters and citizens. And it's something which the graduates and the sponsors of Macalester College should have no trouble accepting. Finally, it seems to me that public faith in American society assumes a continuation of that special American dream: that every American is entitled to a full and just chance for the fullness of American life. That we, as Americans, are not content to be just free, and just rich, and just powerful. The special dream of Americans is to be just and humane as well. And to use our power and our wealth to permit every American to have a decent chance to prosperity, to security, and to the fulfillment of his life, and her life. In the last nine years in the Senate, I guess I've worked harder than anything else on the problems of those who are disadvantaged and impoverished. I have worked years on equal education, on the migrant problem, on Indian problems, on the problems of discrimination, on the problems of hunger and the rest. And any American who cares to open his eyes must admit that despite our wealth and despite our power, there are still millions and millions of Americans for whom the American dream is still very much beyond their reach. And it's not just a question of fulfilling what we claim to believe in, it is good economics but more than that, if we want people to have faith in this government, every American has to see where his stake lies. And it must be that this country shall continue to be the kind of just society that

we have always claimed ourselves to be. And maybe it was best put at the funeral of a dear and close friend of mine, Bob Kennedy, with whom it was my privilege to serve during some five years that he was in the senate. We came to the senate together, we sat together, until his death. Here was a man who I think exemplified that special thing that we call social justice. Of wealth and of privilege, and yet he dedicated his life and lost it in the service of social justice. It was said of him that he was a good and simple man, who saw wrong and tried to right it, saw suffering and tried to heal it, saw war and tried to stop it. May that be said of each of us. Thank you. [Applause]

[39:27]

[Speaker?]: Candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Arts will be presented by Vice President and Provost, Kenneth P. Goodrich. The candidates for degrees will come forward by rows, each candidate will introduced by name and be greeted on the platform by Dean of Students Earl Bowman and President James A. Robinson.

[40:06]

Members of the class of 1973, may I ask you to rise. In the name of Macalester College, on the recommendation of its faculty and by the authority of the Board of Trustees, subject to the completion of all requirements, I have the honor to confer upon you the degrees Bachelor of Arts. [Applause] You may be seated. And now, I would like to ask the families and friends of these graduates might stand, so that the class and the rest of us may join me in thanking you for your part in their lives and for your being here today. [Applause] The commencement program

is now complete. But commencement day is not yet complete. Various classes are holding reunions, there's at least one wedding, and Mrs. Robinson and I together with the chairmen of the departments of instruction will receive the class of 1973 and their families at our home 1644 Summit Avenue during the remainder of this afternoon. We look forward to greeting each of you personally there. The benediction will be announced by the chaplain of the college, Reverend Alan Currier. [Applause]

[42:57]

Al Currier: Have courage, hold on to what is good, comfort the troubled, but also trouble the comfortable. Return no man evil for evil, strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak, help the suffering, honor all men, love and serve the lord, rejoicing in the power of the spirit. And may the blessing of God almighty go and abide with you now and forever more, Amen.